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KUNGL. GUSTAV ADOLFS AKADEMIEN

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BOKFÖRLAGS AKTIEBOLAGET THULE · STOCKHOLM

[Title page]

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# NOTES ON THE IRISH HOUSE. II.

BY ÅKE CAMPBELL, UPPSALA

341 [172] In the Ireland of today there exist not only buildings of a more developed stage of construction, *i. e.* stone-built or mud houses with roofs resting on wooden couples[1] but also buildings of very archaic or of extremely simplified or primitive construction. The stone beehive huts, roofed by a system of overlapping stones and some oval or oblong houses are identical with or closely linked with prehistoric house-types. The huts of wickerwork, sod and turf, on the other hand, represent very simple house-types, of which not all can with certainty be characterized as archaic, but rather as imitations in a simplified form of advanced house-types, or as simple temporary structures, or solutions of individual building problems often due to poverty or lack of better building material.

These groups of buildings offer possibilities of very wide, but at the same time very vague, comparisons throughout the fields of archæological, historic literary and ethnological facts.

341 171 Ireland's cultural position is of great interest, whether Ireland be looked upon as a relic-zone where many culture-elements still persist after they have become extinct in Continental Europe, or whether it be supposed to constitute a critical point in the Atlantic intercepting the different streams of culture flowing from North, South, and East.[2]

There are features common to Irish and Scandinavian archaic or primitive buildings, to Irish and Spanish-Portuguese buildings or to Irish and English buildings, but it would be premature to come to any decision about the origin of these features until the whole area of their distribution has been surveyed. Adapting T. J. Westropp's words about the ancient Irish "Forts" I would say: The key to the origin of the Irish house-types lies as much in a comparison with cognate buildings over the rest of Europe as in the native Irish records.

As it is not possible to arrive at any definite conclusions until investigations have been made on a broader basis, I must content myself here with pointing out some types of buildings and some problems which seem to me to be of certain importance.

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*The clochán type with domed roof.*

172 342 The clochán, or stone bee-hive hut, no doubt represents a very old stage of house-tradition (pl. 29,a—32), although it can be studied from material still existing and, in some cases, still in use in Ireland today (pl. 33, a, b). As it represents a prehistoric type of building, investigations of the Irish clochán and other types of bee-hive, oval or oblong houses from the Iron Age and later times become of immediate interest for the study of recent Irish house-traditions.

A comparison between the common Irish (developed) houses of today and the clochàns (prehistoric or of later date) may give the impression that there is a gap between them that cannot be bridged. Nevertheless the clochán-type constitutes a very suitable starting point for discussion of the recent Irish peasant houses and their history. There are indeed some significant parallels from various countries and different periods, which help to illuminate the problem here in question. In particular I would like to draw [179] attention to the Scottish bee-hive house but also to the black house *(bothán, aridhean, tigh dubh)*, to the remains of circular and roughly oblong huts of stone in other parts of the Brittish Isles, *e. g.* in Carnarvon, Wales, and to the very similar settlements in Spain and Portugal,[3] and in Italy and Greece. In Scandinavia, such settlements and forts as have been excavated in Denmark, Norway and the Swedish provinces of Öland and Gotland must be considered as parallels to the West European material here mentioned.

Descriptions of Irish clochàns can be found in several archæological works. I quote here some descriptions given by Macalister:[4]

"A clochán was built in this manner. A space of the size and shape intended was marked out on the ground with loose stones. Usually the plan was circular or oval, but sometimes the building is circular outside and square within. Above these stones another course was laid, slightly oversailing the course below. A third course overhung the second, and so on; the walls being made thick enough, as they rose, to secure stability. At last the sides of the building approximated together so that the hole in the top of the chamber could be closed with a single flag-stone or with two or more such stones. No mortar of any kind was needed or used, though the outer surface may have been covered with sods or some protection to keep out the rain. As a rule the stones of which the building was composed were laid not quite horizontal, but were sloped outward, so as to shed off rain-water to the outside of the building."

The most famous remains of clochàns are perhaps the six bee-hive cells at

174 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP of P 179 --- Analyst]

PLATE 29.

a. Clochán (beehive hut). Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry. Note to the left in back-ground a very large clochán which has collapsed. The remains of several other collapsed clochàns are inside same *caiseal*, (circular wall enclosing a group of buildings, huts, etc.).

b. Clochàns inside a cashel. Fahan, Dingle, Co. Kerry.

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a.

b.

[p. 175]
[captions on p. 174]

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PLATE 30

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[p. 176]
[captions on p. 177]

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County Kerry



172 342 Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, and the so called "City of Fahan", which probably includes the largest number of buildings of this kind (pl. 29, 30,b).[5] But no investigation has been made — as far as I know — of round stone huts in Ireland built and inhabited in later times. Such investigation has, however, been made on the Scottish Islands by F. L. W. Thomas.[6] It is evident that the bee-hive huts (*both*) of Lewis described by Thomas, are very close to or identical with the Irish clochans, and represent the same building traditions. This also agrees with the accounts of Irish cabins in the literature.[7] I will confine myself here to two descriptions made by Thomas and published in 1860 and in 1869, both dealing with stone bee-hive huts built in late times and used as dwellings. As these descriptions are inaccessible to most readers I must quote them at some length.

342 171 The normal and, Thomas presumes, most modern form of bee-hive house (in the middle of the 19th century) is "an irregular circle, six or seven feet in diameter, the walls rising perpendicularly for three feet; each successive course of stone then overlaps or projects beyond the one below, and then the roof gradually closes in and takes a beehive form. — — — A hole, called the *Farlos (farleus*, a skylight), is left in the apex of the roof for the escape of the smoke, and is closed with a turf or flat stone as requisite. (See pl. 34,c). There are two doors, 2½ feet high and 2 feet broad, and they are placed so that a line joining them cuts off on one side about two thirds of the enclosed area. The two doors are a decided improvement, for that one upon the side on which the wind blows — that is, the weather door — is closed with a stone or turf, while the lee one is left open, and a gentle draught carries the smoke serenely above the head of the inhabitants and through the Farlos. From door to door a row of flat stones, a few inches in height, forms the bench or seat, *being*, and behind this the area is filled up with hay or rushes for a bed. I had a native estimate of its capacity, and found it calculated to hold three people. In front of the bench, and midway between the two doors, is the fire — of peat of course, and not much needed except for cooking. Above the fire, a longish stone draws in and out of the wall for the purpose of hanging a pot on, and in nearly every ruin did we find this primitive instrument in its place, shoved back into the wall."[8]

With the investigations made by Thomas in 1857 and later, the *clochán* as an inhabited living dwelling is brought within the horizon of the study of today. In the following example which is taken from Thomas' description, this house-type of a prehistoric time is allied with a late innovation, namely the stone-built chimney, which in the course of the 19th century seems to



PLATE 30.

a. Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

b. Clochán, Fahan, Co. Kerry.

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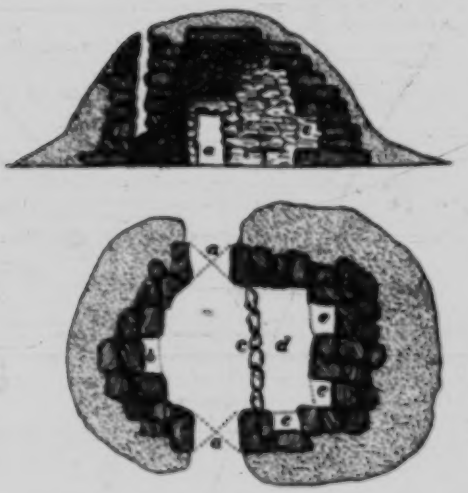


Fig. 1. A bath or clochán on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, a, doors; b, fire-place; c, a row of stones in front of the bed place; d, the bed; e, e, e, small recesses in the wall to serve for cupboards.

become more and more common even in the dwellings of this remote district, thus heralding the total replacement of the black-houses by the white-houses with stone-built chimneys at the gable walls. With regard to the arrangement for the fire, this clochán stands on the same level of development as the many houses or huts of this and later times, the roof of which has been broken through by the stone-built chimney.

The *bo'h (both)* or *clochán* on Cnoc Dubh, at Ceann Thulabhig, Uig, Lewis, fig. 1, is the most modern that Thomas has seen — "and at the same time the last, in all probability, that will be constructed in this manner." It is of bee-hive form, about 18 feet in diameter, 9 feet high, and roofed by the horizontal or cyclopean arch, *i. e.* by a system of overlapping stones. The outside is covered with green turf. There are two doors (fig. 1 a.a) opposite to each other, higher (3 feet) and better formed than is usual. Within, the chamber is dome-shaped and is between 7 and 8 feet square on the floor. A row of stones (c), half a foot in height, cuts off one half of the floor for a bed (d). There are several small recesses (e, e, e) in the wall to serve for cupboards. But what distinguishes this *bo'h* from all others is the presence of a chimney over the fireplace (b). Thomas concludes, from what he heard from the woman who was living in it in 1867, and from va-

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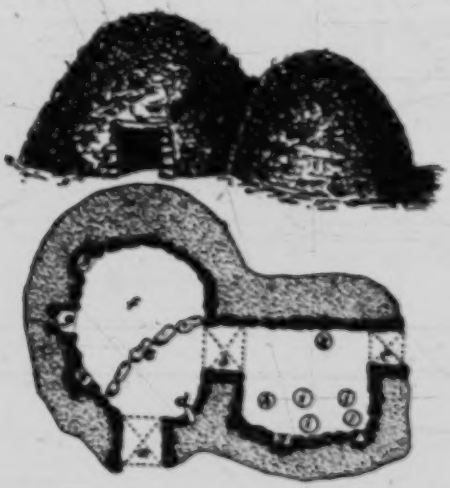

Fig. 2. A double bothi, the garry or summer pasturage of the tenants of Carlista, Uig, Lewis. From Thomas. A, b, c, doorways; d, fire-place; e, row of stones in front of the bed-place; f, the bed; g, g, niches; h, cream tub; i, i, i, three milk or cheese tubs, covered by slaty stones; j, a churn; k, a stoup for carrying water.

rious circumstances, that this *bo'h* was made about ninety years ago (from 1867).

With regard to Thomas's own comparisons, I will only add here that he has made a rather daring comparison between the *bothi* of Lewis and the Eskimo domed-shaped hut of Greenland. But perhaps a comparison of the grouping of the houses would be more effective than a comparison of the house construction of each type.[14] The Greenland hypothesis, however, seems to me to be worth studying. But at the same time we must not lose sight of stone-built huts and huts of straw, sods, mud and wickerwork, round or oval in form, used especially by cattle-breeding peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (*e. g.* in Estremadura, Andalusia, Granada), Italy and elsewhere.

Bee-hive houses of the *clochán* type in Ireland of today are to be found in some parts of the Gaeltacht (the Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland), as on the coast and islands from Kerry to Mayo. There the stone-built bee-hive houses are used — not as dwellings, so far as I know — but as milk-houses or for storing turf etc. In the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry, bee-hive houses are still being built as outhouses. There are also modernised clochán with wooden doors — they can even have a glass ball to decorate the top.

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The only stone-built and stone-roofed houses equipped with a fireplace and

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343 a smokehole which I have found, was an ancient sweating bath, *teach allais*, in Co. Mayo. This building is square in form.

171 Thomas's material is however interesting from a certain point of view. From prehistoric times are found agglomerations of round, oblong and square houses in Ireland (*e. g.* Skellig-Michael), in Wales[9] and in other parts of the 341 British Isles. The same mixture of round and square or oblong buildings can be observed in Portugal,[10] Spain and elsewhere in Western and Southern Europe.

From Thomas's material we now learn what an *inhabited* settlement of this kind looks like. In Lewis, for example, the stone-roofed circular houses, *bothan*, have been erected in the same *gearraidhean*, *i. e.* place for booleying, as the timber-roofed huts, *aridhean*.[11] We are forced to infer that round, oval, oblong, square buildings must be studied with regard to each other and with regard to different constructions in timber, branches, sods, stone etc.

The *oblong form* of building can obviously have developed or been invented in a number of ways, as there are varying antecedent conditions in different cases.[12] There is however *one* oval or oblong form of building which may have its origin in the stone-built domed-roofed bee-hive house.

The construction with a domed roof does not permit of much widening of the space between the walls. Even if very long and suitable flag-stones are at hand, the limits for the cyclopean arch will make it impossible for the primitive builder to enlarge the circumference of his house to any great degree. To get more room he must put two or more circular bee-hive buildings together, or he must go over to the oval or oblong form. Thomas himself touches upon the problem in these words: "It is evident that in this style of architecture (domed roofed buildings) the size of the rooms is limited by the nature of the stone; and although a tolerably safe roof may be made in this manner with rough moor-stones to cover an area of six feet it would have a most uncomfortable and suspicious appearance if extended over twice those dimensions (six or seven feet in diameter). Even in the Orkneys where is abundance of flag stone, although there are chambers there forty-five feet long the breadth was only five feet."

342 To elucidate this important problem the Irish oval *clochán* offers us the most valuable material. I refer to the series of photographs, kindly placed at my disposal by the distinguished author of The Islands of Ireland, Thomas Mason.[13] This *clochán* (Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore Island, Aran, Co. Galway, pl. 30 a, 31, and 32) is of oval shape, the entrance door being at the long sidewall. The roof is made of overlapping stones, one row of large slabs covering the space between the two long sides of the roof, which are

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PLATE 31

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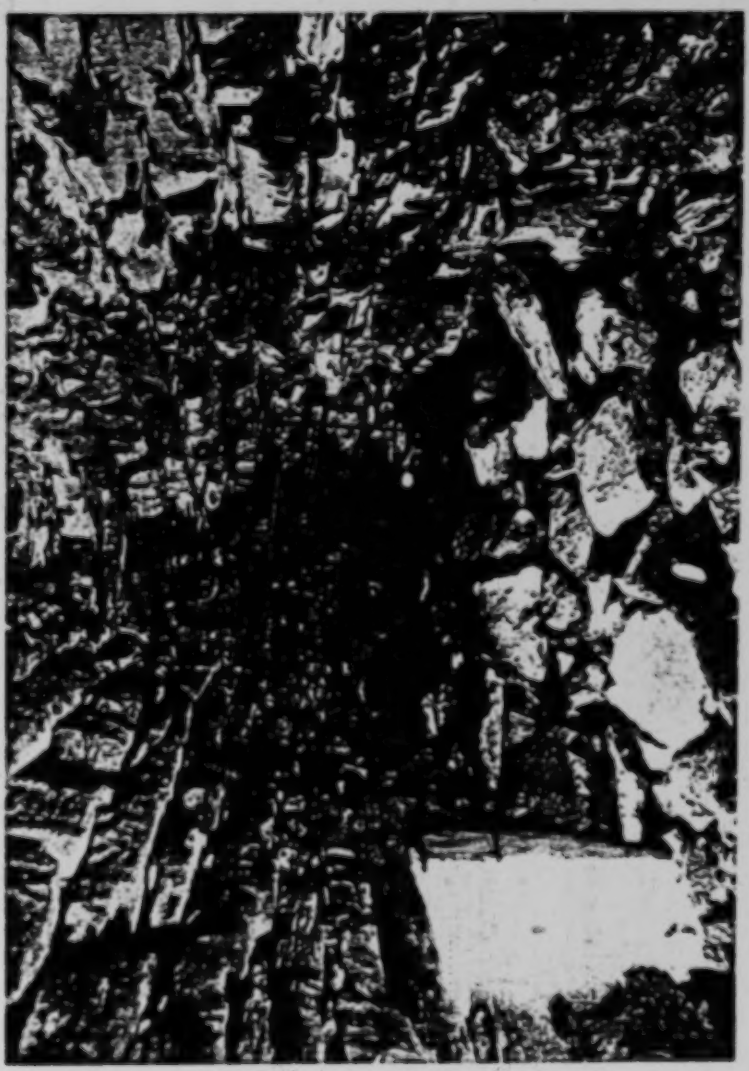

Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

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County Galway

PLATE 32

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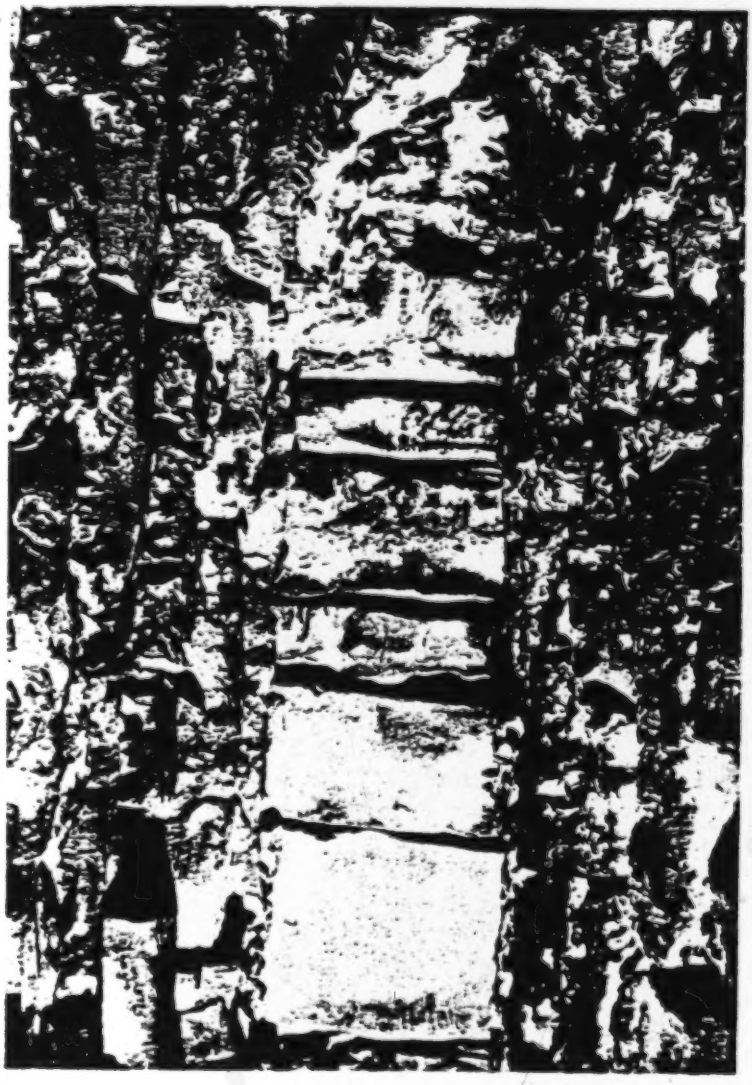

Clochán na Carraighe, Inishmore, Aran Islands, Co. Galway.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

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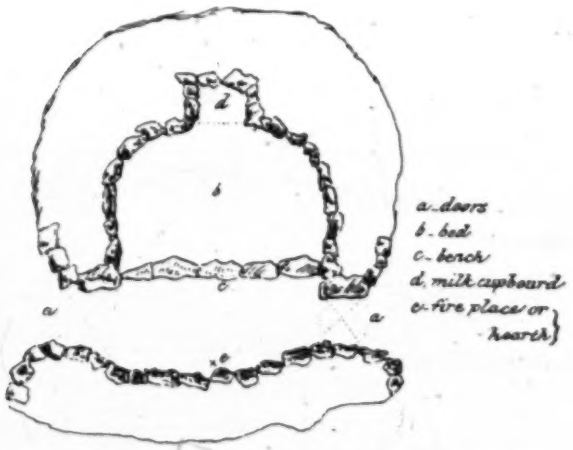


Fig. 3. Both, on West side of Loch an ath Ruadh. Uig, Lewis. From Thomas.

joined together in this manner (pl. 32, an interior showing roof formation. Camera was placed on the ground pointing upwards).

Primitive dwellings and hypogea of the Scottish isles also show the same arrangements. Thus it seems to be evident that the study of the oblong houses there (black-houses, *tigh dubh)* cannot be separated from the study of the *clochán* type. In consequence, it also will be necessary to compare the so-called Norse building customs in the Scottish Isles, which have been put forward by Aage Roussell,[12] not only with Thomas's black-house material — as Roussell does — but also with Thomas's other material including the stone-roofed houses.

[12]

### *Stone built timber-roofed oval houses.*

If my working hypothesis holds, a thorough study of the oval houses will throw much light on Irish building traditions. At least in some parts of Ireland the oval houses formed the basis for the development of native houses of today, *e. g.* the one-roomed central-chimney houses with thatched gables.

It is evident that oval house-types can easily have been reached in places where the round or oval clochán as well as the hut with thatched roof resting on timber are known. When suitable large slabs were scarce, the primi-

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342 tive builder has replaced the doomed roof by the thatched roof if, naturally, timber and material for thatching were at hand.

A great number of houses of this type have been in use as late as the 19th century in remote parts of Ireland. Many references are given in the travel sketches and other literature of that time.

Particular attention may be called to the houses in Achill, Co. Galway, which belong to booleying settlements.

Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, describing the island of Achill[124] tell us about a certain kind of booleying (the cattle were brought down towards the coast when the season for fishing was on). They sketch the houses in a picture, pl. 34,a, and in words:

"The habitations of the islanders are very singular. Their houses are heaps of rude stones moulded by the tide, procured from the beach, uncemented; they are rounded at the gables, and roofed with fern, heath, and shingles, fastened on by straw bands. In the village of Dooagha, consisting
[556] of about forty cabins, there is not a single chimney. Some of the wealthier
[221] graziers, however, have an odd custom of residing in such houses, or in hou-
[231] ses of a still more simple construction, only during the summer months, when the season for fishing is "on", and their cattle are brought down towards the coast to feed on the young herbage. These hovels, they call 'Builly houses'."

From another traveller, Caesar Otway, who made a short excursion in Achill in the summer 1838, can be collected some valuable informations.[125] Otway mentions (p. 353, 356) a certain type of wall construction, viz, the pilledpin double wall: two dry stone walls with the interspace filled in with sand. This is the same archaic construction, which Thomas describes from Lewis. It is also known from archaeological excavations in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

342
361 "An Achill village consisted of congeries of hovels thrown indiscriminately together, as if they fell in a shower from the sky, and their construction was as follows: — a dry stone wall was built of a form like an obtuse oval, for they had not arrived at the art of making a square quoin, or erecting a gable end. Outside this wall, and at about a foot distance, another loose wall was run up, and the space between the two filled with sea sand, and then this was roofed, generally with timber washed on shore from wrecks, and covered with heath, which covering did not reach over the outside wall, and form an eave, but rested on the middle between the walls, and the moisture from above passed, as it should, through the intervening sand."

"— — — we entered the village of Dugurth. Just such a village as I

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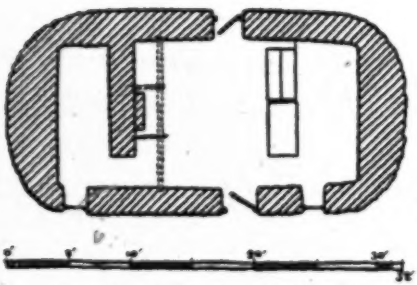

Fig. 4. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

have above described, but certainly containing some houses that *had* gable-ends; but for the most part of the construction I have alluded to, a dirty, dreary, uncouth place — — —."

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Later on (p. 401) Otway has learnt to know the summerherding (booleying) and the difference between winterhouses and summerhouses, and he compares the Irish summerhouses with the Swiss *chalets*.

"Keem, I said, was a singular village; it is only inhabited in summer — who would suppose that the Achillians had such a superfluity of houses, that they had both their winter and summer residences. The Greenlanders and Esquimaux are so changeful, from their excessive vicissitudes of heat and cold — but here I was surprised to find empty every house but two (and these were the residences of the coast-guard), all with their doors fastened

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342 and untenanted; and certainly such miserable wigwams, I had never be-
361 fore seen — all built, as I have already described, without gable-ends. It
221 seems the owners of the village of Keem, and the renters of the adjoining district, have other houses in a distant part of the island, where they spend the winter and spring; thence they come when their oats and potatoes are planted and spend the summer months, herding their cattle on these heights, and leading a pastoral life. Thus in Switzerland they have their chalets on the hills, and in old times in Ireland the creaghts (as they were called) had their boolies on the mountains; but I don't think I ever saw a summer-herding village before."

342 What is said to have been the last oval house in Achill (pl. 33,a), was destroyed in the last two years. An old man (he is seen in the doorway) had lived in it and would not change to any other kind of residence. When he died, the house was pulled down.

This house had dry stone walls. In the middle of the floor stood a beam of bog fir from the top of which beams and branches, also of bog fir, spread out like the ribs of an umbrella, to carry the thatched roof. (This central beam may have been a temporary structure? Cf. p. 192 about the *tuireadh* of the wickerwork house described by O'Curry). The house had no windows and no chimney. The smoke came out through a hole in the roof.

In the year 1936, I measured an inhabited oval house in Inveran, Co. Galway, fig. 4 and pl. 34, b, 35, a, b. This house embodies many interesting features known from prehistoric times. It is built upon very uneven ground and runs from east to west. The several feet thick walls slope as the walls of the oval clochán from the ground upwards. In later times these, built as dry stone walls, have been plastered from outside and whitelimed and the windows added.

The interior is made up by one room, which, however, is divided up to the west by the hob and a protecting wall behind it. Here is the bedroom, in harmony with the wide-spread old tradition mentioned in my former article.[183] To the east, a dresser and a table cut off the lower part to form another bed-alcove.

The house has no outside chimney, but a basket resting on beams leads the smoke out through a hole in the roof. This basket is wattled from osiers and covered with plaster. As the wall behind the fireplace does not go up as far as the roof, canvas is hung to complete the wall.

There are the usual two doors, central and opposite to each other.[184] The roof of straw, scollop-thatched, rests on couples of beams, supported on the

 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 189 ---- ANALYST]

PLATE 33.

a. Oval house. Keel, Achill, Co. Mayo. Photographed in 1903.
b. Clochán, used for storage purpose. Blasket Island.

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PLATE 34

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b

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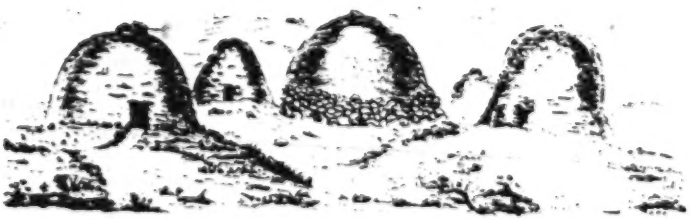

c

[Captions on p. 189]

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342 inner edge of the walls. As the oval house form does not permit any stone-built gables the roof has rounded and thatched gables.

The house as it now stands as a still inhabited homestead constitutes a good example of the stone-built, timber-roofed, oval house, wellknown from the early part of the 19th century. This house can, no doubt, be classified as a link or a cross between the prehistoric oval clochán and the primitive central-chimney house of later times. Thus, if my theory holds, there is no gap, from the point of view of classification, in the Irish house-tradition, as far as the central-chimney house is concerned.

*Huts of wicker-work; sods, turf.*

Although the material here concerned may often seem to be of a very indefinite character, from which only a few certain conclusions can be drawn (see p. 173), it is nevertheless necessary to study thoroughly every kind of primitive hut. The many references to Irish building-culture given in the old literature, indicate the very interesting fact that it was the wickerwork huts and other houses built of various materials, and not the stone-built *clochàns* that may have been very common as small dwellings in olden times.

342 171 During my rather short visits to Ireland, I have not come across any huts of such a kind as wicker-houses, oak-houses, *tech daraeh* etc., as are described by Eugene O'Curry[15] and by him compared with the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius. But inquiries along this line may show that such houses did exist in Ireland not so long ago. Certainly I have got some reports about booleying practised *e. g.* in Donegal up to ninety years ago. The people took their cattle to the mountains in the summer and there they erected huts, *bothogai*, for themselves. But how were these huts constructed? It is probable that they, at least somewhere in Ireland, have been made in a fashion similar to the creel houses in the Scottish Highlands of the same period. I will give some references from Scottish authors, mentioned by Thomas.[16]

According to Walker's Economical History of the Hebrides,[17] the farmers in most Highlands had their homesteads on the arable land, where they dwelt in what are called the winter houses. Soon after the middle of June, when the arable land was sown, they moved with their cattle to a mountainous place belonging to the farm. There they quickly erected or repaired their summer houses which were composed chiefly of sods and branches of trees. "Where wood is at hand, they erect what are called creel houses.



PLATE 34.

a. Houses in Achill, Co. Galway, From Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., by Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

c. Beehive houses. Uig, Lewis, Hebrides. Inhabited 1859. After F.W.L. Thomas.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6



342 171 These are formed of wooden posts, interlaced with branches of trees, like wicker-work, and covered on the outside with turf."

Robertson[9] describes a type of tenant's house, the construction of which must be like the wicker-work houses above-mentioned. "When such a house is to be built, the first thing done is to construct a coarse frame of wood, corresponding to the dimensions of the house, in length and breadth; then upon this frame to fix standards inclining inward, at proper distances, which rise to the height of the intended wall, and are kept in a firm position by being morticed in a tree above of the same dimensions with the tree below. These standards are closely woven with wicker work, to keep the sods from falling in; which, being built on the outside, finish the side walls of a creel-house."

342 221 As the Irish booleying custom, *buaile*, doubtless preserved many primitive and archaic building traditions it should form an important subject of study also with regard to wicker-work huts. However, the summer huts which are mentioned in the Welsh laws are not referred to in the Irish lawtracts. Professor Mac Néill has kindly informed me that this does not mean that the *buaile* custom did not exist in ancient Ireland. "It was probably practised by the less opulent class who had a limited supply of pasture land. The laws have little to say about these, as in general they were under the jurisdiction of a noble."

342 343 The huts erected in later times of sods or turf and used as shelters for donkeys, pigs, etc., which can be met with in various parts of Ireland, would also well repay study. In the literature of the 19th and the early 20th centuries can be found travellers' accounts of such houses, although they seldom go into details about the construction. I refer, *e. g.*, to a description of Caesar Otway's from his "Sketches in Erris and Tyrawly", an account of his travels in Northwestern Ireland in 1840:

"The dwellers here were bog troglodytes — the foundations of their dwellings are sunk eight feet or more below the surface of the surrounding black bog, the walls are constructed of wet sods, cut off from the surface of that bog; there is no door or door-case, no chimney; the orifices by which the people enter, and through which the smoke *should* issue, are filled up as suits the wind, with bundles of heath or turf-kreels, filled with potato-stalks; a drain comes out from under the floor of the dwelling, from which the superabundant moisture escapes, or else it would be a common boghole: but, by its means, the water that springs abundantly from the sides and bottom, flows away, and the people sitting or standing within, are free from actual overflow."

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6



Finally, I will draw attention to the stone-built sheepfolds and other shelters and fences for the cattle, the study of which cannot be separated from the study of the primitive houseforms. Of particular interest to the Irish material of that kind is the material published by Daniel Bruun,[19] Mårten Stenberger[20] and other authors. J. Nihlén and G. Boëthius[21] reproduce in connection with this, some stone walls from the Aran Islands.

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*A glance at the literary material.*

The archaeologists, as has already been mentioned, have studied the stone-built bee-hive houses, but from them we have not many references to houses built of other material, although such houses must naturally have existed. Remarkable is the settlement in Canowheel Mountain, Sligo, consisting of 47 circular walls enclosing spaces of from 20 to 42 feet in diameter. "These were probably protection walls erected to shield from weather huts erected within them and made of flimsier materials."[22]

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In Ireland, there can have existed a millennial tradition of building houses not only with dry stone walls, *falla: fuara*, as in the stone-built *clochán*s, but also with walls of mud or clods, *fallai feidin*, and of *fraigh, i. e.* panel of mud and wattle or lath and plaster construction. The word *fraigh* occurs in some ancient proverbs and phrases signifying the actual wall of the house.[23] In the ancient Irish laws, the word is used for walls of houses. Beyond doubt, *fraigh* means, if Dinneen's interpretation holds, the same wall construction as has been used in Southern Scandinavia and the neighbouring parts of the Continent, from prehistoric times down to the last century.

Although the very comprehensive and learned work of Eugene O'Curry[24] has a number of references to the buildings of the Ancient Irish, it is not easy to gather from them the exact constructional details, nor to decide whether O'Curry has drawn the right conclusions from the terminology in the Laws and the literature. I will not here discuss O'Curry's description, as I am not in a position either to check his conclusions or compare them with the archæological remains or present day habitations regarding the constructional details here in question. I only sum up some remarks from O'Curry that will be useful for further discussion.

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O'Curry says that ancient habitations were of the simplest character and constructed of wood or, where wood was scarce, of mud. The wooden houses however were made either of wicker-work, or of unhewn, or at best roughly hewn trees, the crevices being filled by mud. (I would suggest that

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3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6



174 342 these two wooden wall types can perhaps be compared with such Danish and Scanian walltypes as the "stakavägg" and the "spretavägg".[28]) The houses were of two forms, 1) long quadrilateral buildings, built of wood or mud and straw like the existing mud cabins, and covered with thatch, and 2) cylindrical houses made of wicker-work and having a cup-shaped or hemispherical roof. The houses built in duns and in stone *caiscals*, and those surrounded by mounds of earth, were probably in all cases round houses. As has already been mentioned, O'Curry is of the opinion that the Gaulish wicker-houses shown on the Column of Antonius correspond accurately to the *tech darach* or oak-house with a *cuach-cleithe* or wicker cup roof described in a tale called the "Intoxication of Ulster".

The round wicker-work house is described by O'Curry as follows: "The round wicker house was built by setting up perpendicularly a number of poles or posts of more or less solidity arranged in a circle of the necessary diameter and at equal distances from each other. The interstices between these poles or posts were then filled up with stout hazel and other rods in the form of wicker or basket work until it reached the required height of the wall. In the meantime there was firmly set up in the centre within a stout post called a *tuireadh* of length commensurate with the required height of the roof; into which were inserted by mortices or otherwise attached a certain number of rafters which descended slantingly all round to the tops of the upright posts of the wall into which they were received by tenon and mortice or otherwise attached. — — —

Across the rafters and ribs thus inserted were then laid bands of laths or narrow slips of wood which were fastened with pegs or with gods, *i. e.* twisted withies forming a regular network from the top of the roof-tree to the walls. On these, again, were laid or fastened, at short distances, what may be called a sheeting of rods and thin branches of trees, stretching from the roof-tree to the wall. And now, the shell of the house being finished, it was thatched with straw, rushes, or sedge and neatly fastened down with scollops. — — — I cannot say how they staunched the walls of the round wicker-house, whether with clay, moss, or skins — — —."

In the Ancient Irish Laws are many references to the wicker-house, *tech fithi*.[28]

The following quotation is a translation of part of a law tract which deals here with the status of an *ócaire*, one of the lesser of the freeholding ranks.[28a]

"The size of his house: it is larger than a house of rentcharge. For the size of the latter is seventeen feet. It is of wickerwork to the lintel. From this to the roof-tree, a *dit* between every two weavings (?). Two doorways

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3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Galway

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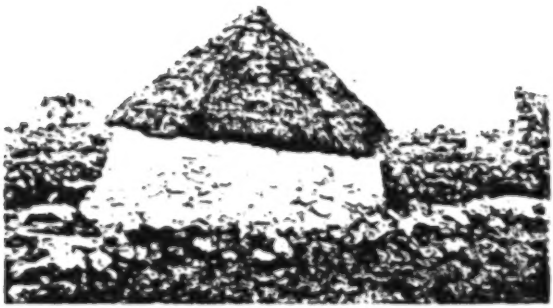

a. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

b. Oval house. Inveran, Co. Galway.

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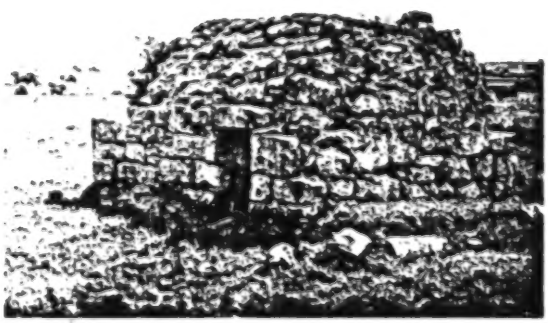

c. Sweating bath. Tuan, Co. Galway.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 36

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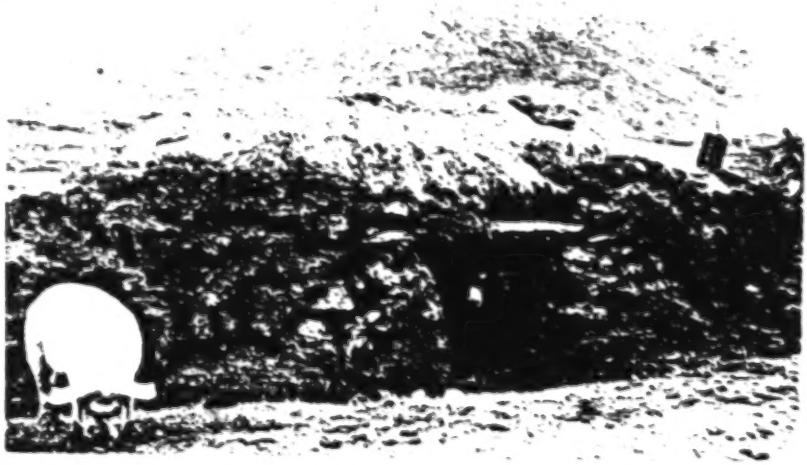
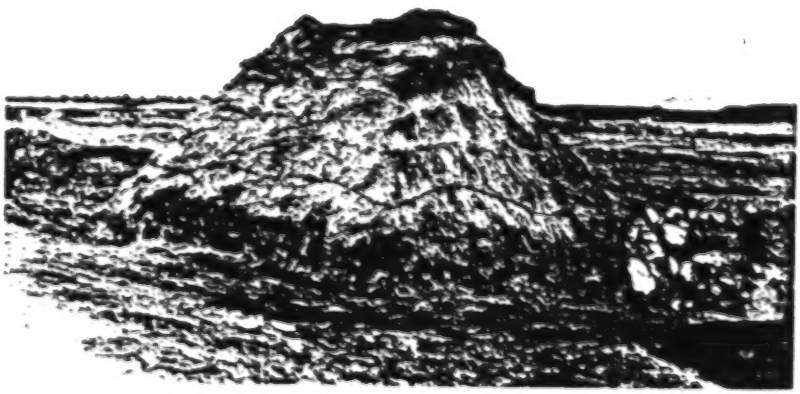


342



a. Sod house. Connemara, Co. Galway.
b. Sod house. Glin, Co. Limerick.

3: Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6



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342 in it. A door for one of them, a hurdle for the other, and this (the hurdle) without (projecting) wattles, without protuberances (?). A bare fence of boards around it. An oaken plank between every two beds."

The designations in the Laws and in early tales as Fled Bricrend, Suidigud Taigi Midehuarta etc., are still difficult to understand, as their vocabulary has not hitherto been elucidated. It will be possible to draw more definite conclusions from them as soon as a joint study by philologists and ethnologists has been carried out. In many parts of Ireland there still survive remains of old building traditions, which in connection with the dialect words, will help to throw light upon the problems of ancient building culture as they are met with in the old Irish literature.

A consideration of the old upper-class house, however, embraces a field outside the scope of this article, involving a discussion of cultural connections over a very wide area."

000 [1] Described in Part I of this article, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 207—234. I repeat my thanks expressed in my former article to the Irish Folklore Commission and to my Irish friends. I want to add the names of Professor Eóin Mac Néill, Mr. Thomas Mason and Miss Máire Mac Néill, who have kindly given me information and assistance.

[2] Cyril Fox, The Personality of Britain, Cardiff 1933, p. 34 sq.

[3] Wheeler, Prehistoric and Roman Wales, Oxford 1925, p. 260 sq., and Bosch-Gimpera, Etnologia de la Península Ibérica, Barcelona 1932, p. 490 sq.

[4] The Archæology of Ireland, p. 242.

[5] Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy XXXI, p. 209 sq. Still other references to beehive houses may be found in archæological literature. Oscar Montelius has previously dealt with beehive houses, *e. g.* in Boning, grav och tempel, Antikvarisk tidskrift, vol. 21.

[6] In Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III, p. 127 sq., and vol. VII, p. 153 sq.

[7a] Cf. Analecta Hibernica No. 2, Jan. 1931 p. 53; Arthur Young, A tour in Ireland 1780.

[8] Thomas, op. cit. vol. III, p. 136.

[9] See R. E. M. Wheeler, op. cit. p. 261.

[10] See P. Bosch-Gimpera, op. cit., p. 490 sq.

[11] See *e. g.* S. O. Addy, The Evolution of the English House, London 1933, p. 38 sq.; S. Erixon, Some primitive constructions, Folkliv 1937, 2/3, p. 124 sq.

[12] Norse building customs, in the British Isles, Copenhagen 1934.

[12a] Ireland: its Scenery, Character, etc., Vol. III., London 1843.

[12b] Caesar Otway, A tour in Connaught: comprising sketches of Clonmacnoise, Joyce County, and Achill, Dublin 1839.

[12c] Folkliv 1937, p. 208.

[13d] See Folkliv 1937, p. 217.

[13] Thomas, op. cit., vol. III, p. 136.

[14] The study of the Scottish material shows that the ancient so-called forts or subterranean or semi-subterranean chambers may also be considered. I shall not, however, enter here on a discussion of this complicated matter.

[14b] I am also grateful to Mr. Mason for having supplied all the photographs of Irish clocháns used by me in this article.

[15] On the manners and customs of the ancient Irish, vol. III, p. 33 and elsewhere.

3. Campbell B, E-5 (1934-1935) 1938 ER6 Rural Irish ER6



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[16] Op. cit. vol. VII, p. 177 sq.
[17] Vol. I, p. 5.
[18] Agricultural Survey of Inverness, Vol. I, p. 318.
[19] Fra de Færoske Bygder, Copenhagen 1926, p. 198 sqq.
[20] Oland under äldre järnåldern, Stockholm 1933.
[21] Gotlandska gårdar och byar under äldre järnåldern, Stockholm 1933, p. 179.
[22] Macalister, op. cit. p. 94.
[23] Dinneen, An Irish-English Dictionary, Dublin 1927.
[24] Manners and customs of the ancient Irish, London 1873.
[25] See Sigurd Erixon, Skansens Kulturhistoriska avdelning, Stockholm 1925, p. 87.
[26] Ancient Irish Houses, ed. O'Donovan, Dublin 1805—1901, Vol. V, p. 496, Vol. VI, p. 497, foot note.
[27] Ancient Irish Laws, Vol. IV, p. 305.
[28] From a paper by Eoin Mac Néill on Ancient Irish Law: Law of Status or Franchise, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Vol. XXXVI, Sect. C, p. 287 sq.
[29] Some prehistoric houses in the Rhineland and elsewhere in Central Europe, have been compared with the Irish upper class houses and described as survivals from the Celtic wave spreading westward over the Continent. See Collingwood, The Archæology of Roman Britain, p. 129—134. Even the Romano-British barn dwelling has been discussed in this connection, see J. A. Richmond, The Analogues of the Romano British Barn Dwelling, in the Journal of Roman Studies, Vol. XXII, London 1932, p. 66, and the Frisian and Saxon houses of today.

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Photographs: Author: pl. 34, a—b; 35, a—c; 36, a—b. Mr. Thomas Mason: pl. 29, a—b; 30, a—b; 31; 32; 33, b.

Out of the following books are illustrations taken: F. W. L. Thomas: Notice of Beehive houses in Harris and Lewis, in Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, vol. III and VII: pl. 34, a. Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall: Ireland, its Scenery, Character etc., vol. III, London 1843, 34, a.